

D/I USAF COMMENTS ON NIE-20
RESISTANCE OF THAILAND, BURMA, AND MALAYA TO COMMUNIST PRESSURES
FOLLOWING A COMMUNIST VICTORY IN INDOCHINA IN 1951

1. Ref. p. 2, para 3, CONCLUSIONS. Change to read as follows:

"3. Short of the commitment of Western military forces in Southeast Asia, there appears to be no method of checking Communist expansion in the event that Indochina falls except through a coordinated defense, led by India the threatened Asian nations themselves and backed by the West. Mainly because of [redacted] It is highly improbable that such a defense could be agreed on or that it could be organized in time to make it effective in preventing the loss of all Southeast Asia to the Communists."

12. Ref. p. 2, par. 4, first sentence: Change to read as follows:

"4. If the Viet Minh should succeed in forcing the French to withdraw from Indochina during 1951, the prestige of Ho Chi Minh would be greatly enhanced throughout Southeast Asia, and the peoples and governments of the area would tend to become convinced even more than they are at present that the advance of Communism is irresistible."

3. Ref. p. 3, par. 5: Change to read as follows:

"5. Open-and-decisive-Chinese-Communist-participation-in-a-Viet-Minh-victory-in-Indochina-would-arouse-fears-in-the-countries-of-mainland-Southeast-Asia-that-they-might-come-under-the-domination-of-the-Chinese,-a-fate-for-which-they-have-a-strong-antipathy---Their-fears-in-this-regard-would-be-stronger-or-weaker,-depending-on-whether-or-not-Chinese-troops-remained-in-Indochina-or-withdrew-after-the-defeat-of-the-French. Despite the strong anti-Chinese feelings of the peoples of mainland Southeast Asian countries, Chinese Communist participation in any form, however, would not be sufficient to cause any of the countries concerned to make effective preparations to resist Communist pressures. On the contrary, the effect of Chinese intervention in Indochina might be to increase the fear of outright invasion of the other countries of mainland Southeast Asia, undermine their will to resist, and increase the probability that without effective outside aid they would seek any an accommodation with the Communist powers."

4. Ref. p. 5, par. 8, second sentence: Change to read as follows:

"If Communist control extended over Indochina, Thailand, and Burma, trans-border aid to the Malayan rebels would become easy, and meet a considerable

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number of the 2,500,000 [redacted] Chinese, now passive in the struggle against the Communists, would might turn against the British Government."

5. Ref. p. 6, par. 9, last sentence: Alter to read as follows:

"Although an operation against Malaya would be more difficult by reason of terrain and the involvement of British military forces, it would probably succeed because of the strength of the internal opposition forces and in view of the virtual certainty that the UK would not find it advisable feasible within the framework of its world-wide strategic commitments to make the economic and military effort required to hold Malaya."

6. Ref. p. 6, par. 10: Revise to read as follows:

"10. Present or planned outside military aid to Thailand and Burma, though it will eventually strengthen these countries, will not enable either of them to defend itself for long against a Communist attack. The effectiveness of military aid to Burma -- which has chiefly come from the British -- has been limited by [redacted] and the materiel has been largely expended in the Burmese internal conflict. The limited US aid program planned for Thailand, even when if completed, would should give the Thais neither-the-power some capability to repel deter a Communist attack now the and sufficient confidence to attempt a serious resistance."

7. Ref. p. 7, par. 11: Revise paragraph to read as follows: "Military aid provided for the area as a whole and used in a coordinated defense of mainland Southeast Asia might, in time, build up military strength sufficient to repel a Communist invasion or formidable enough to deter the Communists from the attempt. It is highly improbable, however, that the necessary agreement among the countries threatened could be reached. It is even less probable, if there is a Communist victory in Indochina during 1951, that agreement could be reached in time to make possible a successful defense of Southeast Asia, Thailand, Burma and Malaya. Several attempts to unite the non-Communist countries of the Far East for a coordinated defense against Communism have failed, primarily because India and Burma have refused to join an organization that they feared would be used to promote Western as opposed to Asiatic interests. There is very little chance that a Viet Minh victory in Indochina, even though Chinese Communist participation were obvious, would radically change India's or Burma's stand. Even if Communist control spread beyond the borders of

Indochina, it does not appear likely that India would be willing to take the necessary steps to make possible the coordinated defense of Southeast Asia. If the time came when an imminent threat to Burma or to India convinced Indian leaders that military action could not be avoided, it would almost certainly be too late for them to organize a successful defense against the advance of Communism. A major cause of the failure of these countries to effect a coordinated defense, apart from their respective divergencies of interest, has been [redacted] refusal to join in alignments that would gratuitously antagonize Communist China. [redacted] refusal to participate in an organization which they fear would be used to promote Western as opposed to Asiatic interests.

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